

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 1 and 3-7 remain in the application. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 2. Accordingly, claim 2 has been canceled. Claim 3 has been amended into independent form. All of the remaining claims also have been amended to eliminate the reference numerals. Reference numerals are not required under U.S. patent law and are given no patentable weight. Accordingly, an amendment to eliminate the reference numerals is not a narrowing amendment and is not an amendment entered for purposes of patentability.

The Examiner objected to language in claim 3 that was considered to be vague. Amended claim 3 addresses the Examiner's objection.

Claims 1, 2 and 5-7 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,638,109 to Kurimoto et al. Claims 3 and 4 were rejected under 35 USC 102(a) as being obvious over Kurimoto et al.

The Examiner will note that the Kurimoto et al. patent is assigned to Sumitomo Wiring Systems, Ltd. The above-captioned application also is assigned to Sumitomo Wiring Systems, Ltd. as evidenced by a document recorded with the United States Patent and Trademark Office on October 14, 2003 at Reel 14617, Frame 861. A copy of the Assignment document and the Notice of Recordation is attached.

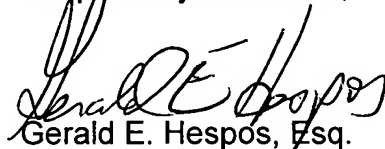
The above-captioned application claims priority on Japanese Application No. JP2002-300950 which was filed on October 15, 2002. A certified copy of the Japanese application has been submitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office. A sworn translation of the priority document is attached. Thus, the applicant herein is entitled to an effective filing date of October 15, 2002. This effective filing date is prior to the earliest publication of Kurimoto et al. reference either in the United States or in Japan.

As noted above, claim 3 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a). Claim 3 now has been rewritten as an independent claim with all the limitations of the base claim. It is submitted that the provisions of 35 USC 103(c) apply to amended independent claim 3, and patentability should not be precluded by the assignee's slightly earlier Kurimoto et al. reference. Claim 4 depends from claim 3 and also should be allowed.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 2. Claim 2 specifies that the lock also serves as at least a part of an inner wall of the cavity while being engaged with the receiving portion. The lock 65 of Kurimoto et al. is spaced outwardly from the cavities and does not serve as a part of an inner wall of the cavity while engaged with the receiving portion. Hence, it is believed that amended claim 1 is not anticipated by Kurimoto et al. It is submitted further that the provisions of 35 USC 103(c) apply to amended claim 2 and its dependent claims 5-7. Thus the obviousness rejection of amended claim 1 and its dependent claims 5-7 should be withdrawn in view of the provisions of 35 USC 103(c) and in view of the sworn English language translation of the priority document submitted herewith.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the claims remaining in the application are directed to patentable subject matter and allowance is solicited. The Examiner is urged to contact applicant's attorney at the number below to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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